

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6737

As Passed Senate, February 16, 2002

Title: An act relating to coordinating implementation of watershed plans.

Brief Description: Coordinating implementation of watershed plans.

Sponsors: Senator Fraser.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Environment, Energy & Water: 2/8/02 [DP-WM, DNP].

Passed Senate: 2/16/02, 28-20.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & WATER

Majority Report: Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Fraser, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Eide, Jacobsen and Keiser.

Minority Report: Do not pass.

Signed by Senators Honeyford and Morton.

Staff: Genevieve Pisarski (786-7488)

Background: A number of state laws authorize various forms of planning and implementation activity for the purpose of managing watersheds. They include Chapter 90.82 RCW, the general watershed planning law, but also the specific Nisqually River Management Plan adopted in 1987. The activity authorized by these various laws generally relies upon cooperative effort by numerous private, nonprofit, governmental, and other entities.

Summary of Bill: Voluntary watershed organizations that are formed to implement adopted watershed plans are eligible for administrative support grants up to \$50,000 annually. Adopted watershed plans include plans under Chapter 90.82 RCW, habitat conservation plans, requirements of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission licenses, Puget Sound water quality action plans, and plans pursuant to legislative directives. Grants are administered by the Department of Ecology from available grant funds and any legislative appropriations.

A state watershed coordinating council is created to provide information sharing and coordination among local watershed organizations and state, federal, and tribal entities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The Nisqually River Council has a long record of accomplishments. Local watershed councils deserve administrative support. A council needs at least \$100,000 annually.

Testimony Against: Implementation of watershed plans should be addressed through the watershed planning process.

Testified: Scott Barr, WRIA 59 (con); David Troutt, Nisqually River Council (pro); Kathleen Collins, Washington Water Policy Alliance (concerns); Hertha Lund, Washington State Farm Bureau (con).